



Bleak autumn mists send down their chilly load,
A raven shivers as he flutters by;
Thro' lonely pasture winds the Rutted Road
Where bord'ring elms loom bare against the sky.

Those deep-sunk tracks, which dumbly point ahead,
O'er travell'd sands that stretch to Vision's rim,
Wake hidden thoughts--a longing half a dread--
Till Fancy pauses at the prospect dim.

Descending shadows bid me haste along
The ancient ruts so many knew before;
A cricket mocks me with his mirthless song--
I fear the path--I fain would see no more.

Yet here, with ox-drawn cart, each thoughtless swain
His course pursu'd, nor left the common way;
Can I, superior to the rustic train,
On brighter by-roads find the dawning day?

With questing look, I scan the dark'ning moor;
Perchance o'er yonder mound all blessings wait,
But still the Rutted Road's resistless lure
Constrains my progress to the Path of Fate.

So must I grope between the brooding trees
Where those before me found the mystic night;
I travel onward, past the wither'd leas-
But what, beyond the bend, awaits my sight?

Do fairer lands than this invite my feet?
Will Fate on me her choicest boon bestow?
What lies head, my weary soul to greet?
Why is it that I do not wish to know?

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